

Lack of research skills teaching not just an African education issue

To the Editor: Madzima *et al.*^[1] address a very real issue in current medical and health education – lack of teaching of research skills. They have piloted workshops aiming to fill the void in research skills and statistics for those who want them, and I applaud them for their efforts. This shortcoming is not limited to South Africa; teaching of research technique and skills is also lacking in the undergraduate curriculum in the UK, although statistics teaching is more than adequate.

Madzima *et al.* highlight the fact that the participants who took part in their study reported an increased understanding of evidence-based medicine and research methods, and an interest in possibly carrying out their own research in the future. Research is of the utmost importance, as it increases the knowledge base that all health professionals rely on to enable us to practise relevant, up-to-date, evidence-based medicine. It is unfortunate that junior doctors and medical students are not being equipped with the skills needed to fill all the necessary competencies expected of a doctor. In the document ‘Tomorrow’s Doctors’,^[2] the

General Medical Council in the UK defines the outcomes for graduates as scholar, scientist, practitioner and professional. Research is central to all these domains, as to be competent scholars and scientists we should be furthering the field; as practitioners we should be practising up-to-date and relevant medicine; and as professionals we should be integrating the other three domains to provide an excellent patient experience.

In summary, Madzima *et al.* should be congratulated on their work and on contributing to a scheme that will benefit trainees and patients alike.

Thomas I Lemon

University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, Wales, UK

lemonti@cf.ac.uk

1. Madzima TR, Abuidris D, Badran A, et al. A pilot course for training-in-context in statistics and research methods: Radiation oncology. *African Journal of Health Professions Education* 2012;4(2):102-106. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.7196/AJHPE.157>]
2. General Medical Council, UK. Tomorrow’s Doctors. September 2009. http://www.gmc-uk.org/static/documents/content/GMC_TD_09__1.11.11.pdf (accessed 3 September 2013).

AJHPE 2013;5(2):100. DOI:10.7196/AJHPE.259